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SA 2217

A fragmentary Smaiusta.

In the beginning there came down to Qwakmai, on Schooner Pass, a woman whose name was Han o. Here she became an a⊥ukwala through a vision which came to her at a lake, but the deatils are lost. To obtain the continued good-will of the power residing in the lake Han o used to throw onto the water eagle down and dyed cedar bark, while when curing she used water drawn from it. One day when Han o was singing her song was overheard by Taiakwala, Kwi⊥nao, Wixon, Qax⊥awals, Suta⊥, and K W lx, who had come to earth at the Nass River, K n ust, and were travelling by canoe looking for a suitable place to settle. The first four named were brothers, the remaining two their sisters. Attracted by the song the six landed and ultimately chose Qwakmai as their abode, where they lived amicably with the powerful Han o. In this they were fortunate as she was so magically endowed that she had success in whatever she undertook.

Taiakwala and his brethren built a huge house of kelp which grew abundantly in the vicinity. In course of time they were able to call people from far and near for a ⊥ m, at which a whale vomitted grease down through the smoke vent onto the central fire causing it to blaze brightly, much to the amazement of the guests. Since that time whenever the owner of the name Xxixx Taiakwala has given a ⊥ m carpenters have prepared for him a wooden whale which vomits grease on the fire, a jealously preserved prerogative.

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MM 2093

A smaiusta.

In the beginning Alquntam sent down X ilkos to Qotlin los, near a lake in the country now occupied by the Carrier Indians. With him came an alk^{w}. X ilkos brought with him a sack in which was the model of a house which, when he set it on the ground, expanded without visible cause, into a fine, large house. In front of it there was a big totem-pole on top of which sat xk an owl.

When X ilkos had preospered and collected a great deal of goods he sent his alk^{w} in all directions to summon the people to a l m. Presently they began to assemble at his house, few in numbers because there were not many people living in those early days. As each group approached the owl turned its head, without moving its body, to inform X ilkos and his people xhm that people were coming, and who they were.

My informant's father never took the name X ilkos and hence never used this smaiusta. Had he done so he would have built for himself a house such as the first X ilkos used, with an owl at the top of the totem-pole.

Origin Myth of Suxwclk.

Among the first people who came to this earth was a man who settled on Dean Channel below Kimsquit, the country of the Gstämx people. He lived there for a considerable period and became the father of many children, among them a son named Älkexa. He was a source of constant worry to his father, who wished him to become a hunter. He made him a bow and arrow, but Älkexa lost the arrow the day it was given to him, and then lost the one his father gave him to replace it. For some time the father made an arrow every day for his son and every day he lost it. This annoyed his father as well as the fact that Älkexa quarrelled with his brothers; so he decided to move away from ~~the~~ settlement, and leave his recalcitrant son there alone. With the other ~~brothers~~ help he took down the side boards of the house, leving only the frame standing, but some glowing embers in a clam shell for the benefit of Älkexa, and they all went away in their canoes.

Not long after the departure of his relatives Älkexa saw a mountain goat on a slide above him. He had only one arrow but decided to try to kill the animal. As he climbed after the goat, it moved down the mountain to meet him; until presently he saw there was a man behind it. The man was a supernatural being. Älkexa hid until he could learn what ~~it was all about~~ the visitation meant and when the supernatural man drew near, he asked him.

The latter replied, "I have come to see you; I bring you this stick," ~~a stick~~ which he held in his hand. "When you want to kill mountain goats hold it thus ~~this way in your hand~~ and make the motion of throwing it, and a mountain goat will fall dead. Also hold the stick in your hand when you pray to Mnakais[1] asking him for whatever you desire, physical strength, success in your undertakings, or anything else ~~you want~~. You must be generous with the riches which this stick will bring to you, give away much goods."

Then the being gave Älkexa the stick and vanished. Älkexa went a

(1) One of Älquntäm's names.

little distance down the mountain, made the motion of casting the stick three times, and three dead mountain goats appeared on the ground before him. He took the fat from the stomach of a yearling and carried it to his father as proof that he had had success in his hunting; then returned to the place where his father had abandoned him.

Next morning he took his stick in his hand and went to the edge of the forest where he stood looking away from the site of the settlement, as the supernatural being had instructed him, and prayed to Mänakais for houses. After praying he looked around and found four large houses ~~were~~ standing on the spot; on the first of which sat an eagle, on the second a kingfisher, on the third a gull, and on the fourth an owl. The ~~eagle~~ screamed, as eagles are accustomed to do in the early morning, and at once the house on which it sat was filled with all manner of goods, including large cone-shaped whistles such as are used for sïsaok ceremonials, ~~in their~~ containing these boxes. During the day the kingfisher rattled the gull called, the owl hooted; and as each uttered its cry the house on which it sat was filled with all kinds of ~~goods~~ foods, skins, blankets, and household utensils. With the goods so ~~acquired~~ acquired Älkexa gave a potlatch to which he summoned the people from far and near. The whistles sounded, imitating the voices of the four birds, which had sat on the houses and through the cries of which the houses had been filled. The Bella Bella chief, Wipitpawakäs, covered his head with his blanket because he had nothing to equal the display, so Älkexa gave him a whistle in its box, All the guests were witnesses of ~~this~~ the transaction, and it was in this way that the sïsaok ceremonial reached Bella Bella.

Älkexa lived to a great age, and during his life-time moved to several places, in each of which he gave potlatches. His last stopping-place was Sxwaxlk Sxwälk, where he gave his largest potlatch, erecting for the purpose a new house with six tiers of seats to hold the audience. It was at this place ~~that~~ there that he died.

Since then his procedure has been copied, and the practice of giving potlatches has spread all over the coast, the whistles always imitating the voice of the bird in question. This is the origin of the potlatch in British Columbia. When a descendant of ~~this man~~ gives a potlatch he erects outside his house a totem pole on which are the four birds that brought about his ancestor's good-fortune.

~~MW 2681~~ ~~XX A smaiusta.~~ ~~The Great Hunter~~

In the begiining four brothers, Waak s, H ms t, Kalas k, O qwolikt mut, and their sister Klakwakila, came to earth at Sea-liin Island, Spi xnunsta, to the west of Namu, Na mu. They moved from Sea-lion Island to settle at Qwi yai, but often returned to their landing-place to hunt se-lions which they would club to death. O qwolikt mut was the most prosperous ~~x~~of the brothers, so much had his wealth increased that he was able to call the people from all parts of the coast to a ~~l~~ m.

~~Al~~quntam had given ~~x~~ Klakwakila the duty, though it was regarded as an honourable prerogative and not as an irksome duty, of singing the mourning song (skwanat) whenever anyone died. When it was time for her to function she would paint her face with a design of rough sea and beat time on the floor with a stick on which were jingling copper bangles. The theme of the song was how Qwax had brought her hepl on all occasions.

The right to sing this song has since been preserved and is now the prerogative of my informant. No name accompanies this prerogative, but it must be duly validated by the giving of presents.

An early tstämx Myth.

Not long after the first people had come to this earth, Raven taught an tstämx chief, Qä'pxaok by name, how to catch Black Cod by means of a hook and line. It was summer at the time, and Qä'pxaok began to make preparations for fishing early the following year. He instructed his wife to take three female assistants with her to the woods to collect a large quantity of cedar bark to be used for making the long line which ~~had~~ was to be at least three hundred yards in length, owing to the depth at which Black Cod are found in Laboucheres Channel. The four women returned after four days with a large amount of the material with which they worked all summer and the following winter. Meanwhile Qä'pxaok, with three male assistants, was busy manufacturing hooks of the shape shown in the accompanying sketch. They were made from the knots ofdead and fallen hemlocks. The interior was first cut out, bent into the desired shape, smeared with mountain goat grease, and tied. After a week the lasning could be removed and the hooks retained their desired shape. By January all was ready, and the onerous task of lasning the many hooks to the line ~~had been~~ completed.

Qä'pxaok set out from his home with a number of companions to Laboucheres Channel, where they caught ~~for bait~~ a large quantity of the small fish known as tlekinoltetl. These resemble sardines, and are commonly used for bait, in fact, oultetl means "bait". After catching them in the evening the cod line was thrown out next morning before the fishermen ate. Qä'pxaok had great success, ~~catching~~ taking in over one hundred cod ~~at~~ with a single time, owing to the number of hooks on ~~his line~~ it. It was winter so he did not lower his line more than once a day. He fished steadily, drying his spoil ~~as he went~~ daily, until ~~by~~ April, when he could lower his line three times a day and catch an enormous quantity of fish. ~~As many as~~ All who saw his success were amazed ~~at it~~, and many

copied his method; since at that time the use of a hook and line for cod has been a common practice.

When Raven taught Qä'pxaok how to catch cod he also instructed his wife how to clean and prepare them, and admonished her above all not to throw the entrails back into the ocean. The woman remembered this injunction, but she failed to teach her daughter, and the little girl frequently threw the remains into the sea. , chief of the supernatural beings, dwelling beneath the ocean knew of this and was angry at the insult offered to Black Cod, of which, as of all other fish, he was chief. The underwater beings hunt on behalf of their chief, so the latter sent the Black fish with instructions to carry off Qä'pxaok's daughter, a pretty girl named Aitsamk,a. This is a Bella Bella word, which probably means "Very good". The Black-fish watched the girl as she came to the edge of the sea, and took advantage of her going a short distance into the water to carry her off. Since she was below the age of puberty the supernatural fish did not have any fears in approaching her. To those on shore it appeared as if she had been devoured by the Black-fish; in reality they bore her away in their canoe, which, like that of the salmon, is invisible to mortal eyes, to Ḳomoqwa's house. She found herself among many strange fish, and in the presence of the mighty Ḳomoqwa who wore his usual broad brimmed hat.

When those who had seen the kidnapping of Aitsamk,a told Qä'pxaok and his wife, they grieved for their daughter thinking her dead. In mourning they stopped fishing and tore their hair. From afar Raven saw their grief and came to ask its cause.

"For some unknown reason I have lost my daughter." Qä'pxaok answewe;

"I think it must be due to your having cut up Black Cod in some manner other than that in which I directed you. If you had followed my instructions this trouble would not have come upon you."

Meanwhile Ḳomoqwa had been questioning Aitsamk,a; "Why did you not

obey Raven's instructions about cutting up Black Cod? You have been committing a very serious offence, but I shall return you to your parents tomorrow and you can tell them to be more careful in future about teaching people."

The land in which the little girl found herself was much like this earth, containing a river, with the ocean in place of the sky over it. An old woman, Snulqulxäls di Q̓omoqwa, who was living in Q̓omoqwa's house told Ait̓sa·mk,a not to eat any unfamiliar food which her captor-host might offer her, ~~otherwise~~ or she would be unable to return ~~whence~~ she came. If she ate nothing except what she was accustomed to ~~eat~~ at home she would be all right. Presently someone asked her what she would like to eat; she named several of her favourite dishes and they were brought to her without demur. Next morning, it was really next year but she did not know that, Q̓omoqwa prepared to send her back. From the doorway of his house she could see the cod lines hanging down through the water, and Qomoqwa asked her if she could see her father's.

"No", she replied, "he is not there."

In what seemed a few minutes; but in reality several months, because Qa pxaok did not begin his fishing until March, she saw his canoe approaching

She said to Q̓omoqwa, "That is he. I recognise his paddle."

Qä·pxaok dropped his line, and as he did so began to cry, thinking of his dead daughter. Acting on Q̓omoqwa's instructions, Ait̓sa·mk,a grasped the lowest hook, while Q̓omoqwa sent a Black Cod to each of the others. After a couple of hours Qä·pxaok recovered from his spasm of grief and hauled up his line, assisted by his two sons who were with him in the canoe. So great was their amazement at seeing Ait̓sa·mk,a on the line that they refused to believe their eyes and wanted to throw the line back, but she quickly called out:

"I am your daughter."

The father thankfully drew her into the boat, exclaiming at her long absence; this was the first she knew that she had been away for more than a single night.

Her two brothers called out, "Qä·pxaok's daughter has returned, haul

in your lines."

The news was passed from boat to boat, the fishermen drew up their lines and hurried ashore to Qä'pxaok's house, eager to hear in what had happened. Fresh sand was spread on the floor, as is always done when a person has been in contact with supernatural beings; otherwise he or she will be unable to enter.

Aitsamk, a told every thing; how her mother had failed to teach her how to cut up Black Cod, and how as a result of which Q̇omokwa sent Black Fish to catch her so that she might be taught. She gaid finally, "You must be very careful to cut them up properly or otherwise trouble will come upon you."

The correct method, taught by Raven, is to split the fish cleanly without severing the bones. Qä'pxaok's daughter had erred by cutting that which is equivalent in a fish to the human collar-bone. She told of the fish that abounded in Q̇omoqwa's house; of the Red-fish, which disobyed their mother by playing outside his house where often their stomachs were forced out from their mouths so that they floated up to the surface; of Q̇omoqwa, himself, and his large hat; and of the denizens of the underworld. The people listened attentively and ever after cut up Black Cod in the prescribed fashion, though if Aitsamk, a had not been carried off to Q̇omoqwa's house Raven's teaching would undoubtedly have been forgotten.

Not long after his daughter's safe return Qä'pxaok gave potlatch. He took for himself the name Q̇omoqwa, and at the same time imitated in his own house as much as possible of what his daughter had described. Thus there were imitation fishes, especially the halibut, around the house, while the Red-fish were shown as wooden models which could be drawn up to the roof by hidden strings, representing the manner in which the fish floated up to the surface of the ocean.

Q̇omoqwa, himself, was shown wearing his large ball-topped hat, of the type known as ẹạọtl̲. This type of hat was always worn by Q̇omoqwa and Ä̲qun-täm and, as many of the first people obtained their power from one or other of

these supernatural beings, the prerogative of using these hats at potlatches was quite common. They are made of cedar roots and are waterproof. They are usually painted with one of the wearer's ancestral crests. When either Q̇omoqwa or Älquntäm is shown on a totem-pole he is ~~shown~~ wearing one of these hats.

While ~~Wasem~~ Aitsamk, a ~~man~~ was under the water Q̇omoqwa had shown her sisaok whistles, and at this potlatch they were used while the girl was concealed within the back room as a sisaok initiate. This was the origin of the sisaok ceremonial, which spread in time from the Gstämx people to the Bella Coola. The name Q̇omoqwa passed in time to Qä'pxaok's son, who, when he gave a potlatch arranged his house in imitation of Qomoqwa's; since that time any possessor of this ancient name has decorated his house in a similar manner when giving a potlatch. From that time Q̇omoqwa has been a common Bella Bella tutwinaur, and in the potlatch house Q̇omoqwa is shown with his huge hat.

Knowledge of this myth came to my informant through the marriage of his mother's mother to an Gstämx man.

SA 2177

A smaiusta.

In the beginning of time the Sea-lions came down to earth at an island outside Rivers Inlet. Here they bred and multiplied so t at the island is still known as Sea-lion Island. Hunters from all parts of the coast used to go to this island as the animals were not only good food but they were easy to kill.

On one occasion a man had wandered apart from his companions when he met a stranger who invited him into his house. The man accepted and followed his host into a near-by house, though e had never known before that there was a house at this point. Once inside the door closed with a metallic crash and the rash explorer vanished from the sight of his companions who thought that he must have been drowned. But he had really entered a Sea-lion house. The animals were sitting around their fires exactly as humans are accustomed to do, in fact the only strange thing was that they were using human knee-caps as dishes. He listened to the conversation of the Sea-lions.

"Lend your dish to N qaqa", he heard one of the animals say to a friend.

Mr N qaqa was an old woman who was sitting in one corner of the house.

"The dish will be too small to hold a meal", thought the mortal.

The Sea-lions could understand his thoughts.

"Don't say that", said one of them. "N qaqa has the power of making the food inexhaustable."

Presently one of the Sea-lions gave the man a knee-cap dish containing a minute morsel of halibut soaked in oil.

"That won't be enough for me", he thought.

But again a Sea-lion comprehended his thought and told him not to say such a thing. It was true. The man ate and ate until he could eat no more but the amount of food on his plate did not diminish.

The man stayed for several months with the Sea-lions but at last grew home-sick and lonely. The Sea-lions knew his thoughts.

"Your home is not far away," said one of them. "We will send you home whenever you like. You can travel on a wave; would you prefer one that will carry you at one sweep, at two, at three, or at four?"

The man thought of the jolt with which he would str ke the beach if he travelled the whole distance on a single billow, so asked to be sent on a four billow wave. His canoe was a Sea-lion's stomach into which he climbed through the mouth and which he made watertight by tying up the entrance with the animal's entrails. Whether or not the animal was alive is not clear. At any ra e the man set off in the strange craft. He felt as if he were on the back of an animal which made long, easy, slow, bounds, it was the slow surging of a gigantic Pacific comber. After four bounds he untied the neck of his craft and found that he was home.

Certain names have been preserved from this amaiueta. The name N qaqa is now used by my informant's dog, a s she is the last of her family. Another name is Tl x rxmitl, "The Crash", derived from the metallic sound given forth by the closing door of the Sea-lion house. The name N mutsta was also obtained inside the house, but the details of its significance are lost.

An Early Myth of Kulde't.

As has been said, ambitious individuals especialy if theylack origin myths of the customary kind, often claim ordinary stories as such. The following is almost certainly a case in point. It was obtained from a thoroughly unreliable informant, who claimed it as a family myth, and who had used it for this purpose at a potlatch. He said it was a Bella Bella story which he had obtained through the marriage of one of his ancestors with a Bella Bella woman. From another informant, ~~who was~~ well versed in Bella Bella folk-lore, the writer obtained another version of the myth, (1) recounted as a mere story. There seems little doubt that the first ~~teller~~ narrator had merely laid claim to a common story to supply the deficiency of a true myth.

In the beginning, there came down to earth at the head of Gas Bay, Kulde't, a man whose name was Käsän'a. He came to earth as a ~~man~~ solitary individual. He came alone, no woman was with him, and he was so lonely that he made for himself, a woman (2) from soft punky wood (1), whom he dressed in blankets and clothing and ~~to whom he~~ gave the name, Qwa'lams, ~~which is~~ in Bella Bella language. Kasan a was a great hunter; every day he went out to ~~hunt~~ seek mountain goats, from which he made great quantities of grease and yarn that he made into blankets. Before leaving the house he always placed Qwa'lams in front of a loom, putting food beside her, ~~and telling~~ told her to eat as much as she liked and to work diligently.

Other people had come down to earth at the same time as Käsän'a, and among ~~others~~ them a man and his wife who landed at the mouth of Gas Bay. They had two daughters who, walking one day at the head of the bay, were surprised to find a house. They looked in and saw a woman, so entered, and laughed heartily to find her made of rotten wood. They kicked over the figure and the head fell into the fire and was burnt. Then they seated themselves in her place, worked diligently at the blanket, and ate a large amount of the food. Towards dusk they put the figure back in its place and hid themselves.

(1) See page

Soon Käsäń a entered. He embraced the figure, called her a good wife, and thanked her for spinning so diligently and for having eaten so much of the food. Then he saw that she had burnt her head, and chided her, saying that she must take better care of herself. At this the two girls who were hiding burst out laughing and showed themselves. They suggested to Käsâń a that he choose one of them for his wife, He agreed, ~~and~~ selected the elder and married her. He had built a house on a hilltop, where they lived, and to which he called people from far and near when he gave a potlatch.

S SAOK ORIGIN MYTHS.

As already stated, many s saok names are believed to have come down from above with the first Bella Coola, or to have been created by them on this earth. In such cases, the s saok origin myth is the same as the ancestral myth. Theoretically, such names can also be received through visions in which the beholder receives his new name from some supernatural being, or takes it from the ~~xigmk~~ vision itself. In either case, of course, the name must be duly validated by the giving of presents. The writer was able to obtain only three myths which deal solely with the acquisition of a s saok prerogative. No doubt this is ~~kargsixxxxpixxxhkx~~ chiefly to be explained ~~from~~ by the fact that most s saok rites have been obtained from the Bella Bella.

The Origin of the S saok name, Spuxpuxxa mp imut.

Some eighty years ago, when the mother of one of my informants was a young woman, a party of X xais Indians (1) spent the winter in Bella Coola. Early in the spring one of them broke his leg so that he was unable to return home. My informant's mother took the injured man into her house and charitably cared for him. The injury did not heal properly, so that the ~~x~~ patient was crippled for life. He used to work around the house at light chores, but was unable to perform any hard work. He was virtually adopted into the family, though, lacking land in Bella Coola, he could never acquire any real status there. After remaining in Bella Coola for more than five years the cripple became ill, and realized that he was about to die. In gratitude to the woman who had sheltered him, he asked her to use his s saok name, Spuxpuxxa mp imut, for one of her children, if she ever had any. Soon afterwards the

(1). It was impossible to identify this tribe. According to the Bella Coola they are akin to the Carriers, but have adopted the use of totem-poles, kusiut dances and the s saok ceremonial through intermarriage with the coastal people of the Skeena River. Their home is said to be far to the north of Ootsa Lake, but, as no Bella Coola has visited them, little reliability can be placed on this statement.

stranger died. The family of my informant's mother paid for his burial, and it was recognized that the name, with myth attached, belonged to them. In later years it was duly validated with presents at a potlatch, for the benefit of my informant.

The myth is as follows:—

Long, long ago, a number of the sons of chiefs were playing on the shore of Ootsa Lake, not far from a village. One of them, happening to look upwards, was surprised to see drifting down from a great height a spuxpux, one of the long feathers which ~~xxuxfxuud~~ grow on the upper leg of an eagle. They idly wondered who would get it, and pressed close togther, ready to struggle, boy-like, for the feather. It eluded their upstretched hands, and lit on the head of one of the boys. Then, to the amazement of all, the boy was lifted from the ground, as if the feather had been a magnet drawing him aloft. One of his friends seized his ankles and tried to pull him down, but without success. Moreover, he found that he could not release his grasp. ~~Anotherxboyxgraspud~~ A third lad grasped the feet of the would-be rescuer, but he, too, was lifted from the ground. One after another tried to pull down their friends, but none could do so, until finally all the boys were drawn aloft by the feather, each holding the legs of his predecessor. Nothing ~~more~~ was ever heard of their fate.

A few years later the father of the boy on whom the feather had fallen gave a potlatch at which he used this event as a s saok theme for one of his surviving children. A mask representing the sun was used in the belief that this supernatural being alone could have caused such an event. The name used for the s saok initiate was Spuxpuxxa np imut, with reference to the feather which had carried away his brother.

A bout forty years ago a man of ~~Xdnit~~ S nxi was made a shaman by the supernatural being T!aqmai ks, a woman who normally lives in the land above. She is made almost entirely of copper so that whenever she walks there is the sound of clashing metal. The visionary received the shaman's name of S s nxakila. It was not generally known how he obtained his power, but as his wealth increased in an amazing manner, it was assumed that he must have obtained something from T!aqmai ks which, kept in his box, acted as a magnet to wealth.

S s nxakila laid down four laws for behaviour in his house, which were obeyed, since he was a person of influence both as a shaman and as a man of wealth. He said that T!aqmai ks had instructed him in these: ~~They were:~~ —

1. No fire was to be taken from the central fire. S s nxakila stated that the supernatural ones were watching ~~the fire~~ it and would be offended if any ~~of it~~ was removed.

2. No menstruating woman ~~was~~ allowed within the house.

3. No punding of cedar bark allowed within the house.

T!aqmai ks or S s nxakila.

4. Since his power was in some manner connected with ~~the~~ fire he decreed that while ~~when~~ the singers were singing his song there was to be no obstruction of any kind between ~~any~~ one of them and it. Accordingly, the singers did not arrange themselves in the usual circle, but sat in a row with a sloping mat stretched between them and the fire, as if it were a causeway connecting ~~the two~~.

Whenever S s nxakila gave a dance six holes were cut through the wall of the back-room, at a height of about seven feet from the floor. While actually dancing, six assistants puffed eagle down through these holes onto his head, in time to the music. Moreover, instead of dancing on the floor, S s nxakila used to perform within ~~from inside~~ a large box, which concealed him up to his thighs. This box was moved to and fro by assistants, as if it had been on casters. After dancing in time to two songs, a metallic clashing would be ~~was~~ heard and S s nxakila ~~used then to~~ would rush forth, returning with a small girl wearing a mask ~~and those~~ her clothing ~~was~~ entirely covered with small copper ornaments. This represented T!aqmai ks. S s nxakila ~~used to~~ would guide the figure to the box, lift her in, then leap in himself and dance vigorously beside her. After a time he carried the figure to the back-room, whence he returned alone to supervise the usual distribution of presents.